

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 7648

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORTS ON "NAXALITE" ACTIVITY

REF: (A) STATE 133302

(B) NEW DELHI A-99, MAR 14, 1975

SUMMARY: EXCEPT FOR AN ISOLATED RAID ON A POLICE STATION IN ANDHRA PRADESH, THE SPATE OF RECENT PRESS REPORTS ON "NAXILITE" ACTIVITY STEM FROM THE SEASONAL UPSWING IN SPORADIC RURAL VIOLENCE WHICH NORMALLY ATTENDS THE SPRING HARVEST. INDIA'S LARGE PRVETY-STRIKEN LANDLESS LABORER POPULATION USE THIS PEAK EMPLOYMENT SEASON TO AGITATE FOR HIGHER WANGES OR FORM ORE OF A SHARE OF THE CROP THEY HARVEST. LANDLORDS RESIST. TENSIONS MOUNT. OCCASIONALLY THERE ARE ARMED CONFRONTATIONS. LANDED INTERESTS OR THE PRESS OFTEN RUSH TO BRAND THOSE UN-TOUCHABLES OR TRIBALS ASSERTING THEIR LONG-IGNORED DEMANDS AS "NAXALITES." THIS YEAR, AS IN THE PAST, THRE HAVE BEEN A LARGE NUMBER OF SUCH INCIDENTS IN BIHAR, WEST

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BENGAL AND EASTERN UP. POLITICAL NAXALITISM OF THE LATE

SIXTIES VARIETY REMAINS DOWN AND THE SUBSTANTIAL PARA-MILITARY POLICE FORCES IN INDIA ALMOST ENSURE THAT IT WILL REMAIN SO IN THE SHORT RUN. OVER THE LONG RUN, WITH OR WITHOUT A NAXALITE CATALYST, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DISPARITIES IN RURAL INDIAN AND THE GROWING POLITICIZATION OF THE RURAL POOR WILL RPBABLY PUSH UPWARDS THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. END SUMMARY.

1. RECENT PRESS REPORTS ON "NAXALITE" ACTIVITY IN INDIA LARGELY STEM FROM THE SEASONAL UPSWING IN RURAL VIOLENCE WHICH ATTENDS THE SPRING (RABI) HARVEST. THE RABI HARVEST IS ONE OF THE TWO PEAK EMPLOYMENT SEASONS FOR INDIA'S LARGE LANDLESS LABORER POPULATION. THE UNTOUCHABLES AND TRIBALS THAT MAKE UP MOST OF THE POPULATION CHOOSE THIS TIME WHEN THEIR MUSCLE IS IN MOST DEMAND TO AGITATE FOR HIGHER WAGES, OR TO CLAIM A GREATER PROPORTION OF THE CROP FROM THE LANDLORD. FREQUENTLY THESE DEMANDS FALL FAR SHORT OF WHAT THEY ARE GRANTED IN MINIMUM WAGE AND LAND LEGISLATION THAT HAS BEEN IN STATUTE BOOKS FOR DECADES, BUT IS IGNORED BY THE POLITICALLY POTENT WEALTHY FARMER LOBBY STRATEGICALLY PLACED OR DOMINANT IN PRACTICALLY EVERY STATE GOVERNMENT IN INDIA.

2. GENERALLY THE REPORTS ON "NAXALITE" ACTIVITY GROW OUT OF A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN UPPER CASTE LANDLORDS AND THEIR LABORERS OVER THESE ISSUES. VIOLENCE ERUPTS. BOTH SIDES OCCASIONALLY RESORT TO ARMS. THE CONFRONTATION OFTEN ENDS WITH A PUNITIVE ARMED RAID BY THE LANDLORDS AND THOSE THEY HAVE RALLIED (SOMETIMES INCLUDING THE LOCAL POLICE) INTO AN UNTOUCHABLE OR HARIJAN DWELLING AREA. HUTS ARE LOOTED AND BURNED AND TPIIR INHABITANTS KILLED OR DISPERSED. IN THE END, THE LABORERS' PRESSURE MAY FORCE SOME CONCESSION, BUT NOT MUCH. TOBUMUCH IS AT STAKE ECONOMICALLY AND FACE AWISE FOR THE LOCAL ELITE.

3. PLAIN BANDITRY IN RURAL AREAS AND THE SETTLEMENT OF LOCAL DIFENRENCES (FAMILY FEUDS, LAND DISPUTES) THROUGHT FORCE ARE ALSO PICKED UP THE THE PRESS OR PROTRAYED BY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AS "NAXALITE" GENERATED. ACTUALLY, CONFIDENTIAL

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HOWEVER, THROUGHOUT INDIA REPORTED INCIDENTS OF THE POLITICAL NEXALITISM OF THE LATE SIXITIES ARE STILL WAY DOWN, THOUGH CPM AND CPI/ML CADRE ARE ACTIVELY ATTEMPTING TO FOMENT VIOLENCE AMONG OPPRESSED TRIBAN AND UNTOUCHABLE GROUPS IN SOME STATES. THE ONLY NAXALITE INCIDENT IN 1975 REMINISCENT OF THE LATE SIXTIES AS A MAY 21 RAID BY SOME 30 NAXALITES ON A POLICE STATION IN GUNTUR DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH. THE ATTACKERS, LED BY EXTREMIST CIP/ML CADRE, KILLED A

CONSTABLE AND SEIZED SOME WEAPONS, ALL OF WHICH THE GOAP CLAIMED TO HAVE RECAPTURED SEVERAL DAYS LATER. CONGEN MADRAS REPORTS THAT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GUNTUR RAID SHOULD NOT BE OVERDRAWN. THOUGH THERE HAS BEEN A SLIGHT INCREASE IN NAXALITE ACTIVITY IN ANDHRA DURING 1975, THE GENERAL LEVEL OF ACTIVITY REMAINS VERY LOW COMPARED TO 1967-1970 (IN 1970, 29 NAXALITES WERE KILLED AND 459 ARRESTED; IN 1973 AND 1974 THESE FIGURES WERE 4 AND 44 AND 0 AND 49 RESPECTIVELY. IN 1975, OVERALL ACTIVITY IS FOLLOWING THE 1973-74 PATTERN). THE ANDHRA STATE GOVERNMENT HAS THE SITUATION WELL UNDER CONTROL AND CONTAINED IN ISOLATED TRIBAL POCKET IN THE NORTHEASTERN PART OF THE STATE.

4. THE GOI THROUGH ITS SUBSTANTIALLY ENLARGED PARAMILITARY POLICE RESOURCES CAN HANDLE THE CPI/ML TYPE VIOLENCE REPRESENTED IN ANDHRA. OVER THE LG& 4(*1 THE SPORADIC RURAL VIOLENCE DESCRIBED IN PARA 1-3 WILL BE MORE TROUBLESOME. IT IS ALREADY A PROBLEM IN MOST OF INDIA PARTICULARLY IN BIHAR, WEST BENGAL AND EASTERN UP WHERE SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IS THE MOST RIGID AND ECONOMIC DISPARITIES ARE GREATEST. AS THE SLOW BUT STEADY POLITIZATION OF INDIA'S POOR COUNTRIES OVER THE YEARS AHEAD, AND AS THEY BECOME INCREASINGLY AWARE AND ASSERTIVE OF THEIR RIGHTS, THE CYCLE OF RURAL VIOLENCE MAY ASSUME PROGRESSIVELY GREATER LEVELS--WITH OR WITHOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF RADICAL POLITICAL PARTIES.

5. PLEASE SEE REF AIR FOR A POLITICAL-ECONOMIC STUDY OF INDIA'S RURAL POOR.
SCHNEIDER

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